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Terry Goddard Warns Seniors about Callers Claiming to Represent Medicare

(Phoenix, Ariz. – July 18, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard today warned senior citizens to be wary of callers claiming to be with Medicare offering a new Medicare card.

Recently, several Arizona consumers have been contacted by individuals claiming to represent Medicare who ask for bank account information, as well as other personal identifying information such as date of birth.

A similar scam involves callers claiming to be from the "National Medical Office." The caller tells the intended victim that his or her Medicare card is no longer valid and offers a new Medicare card for a "low-income discount." In some situations, the callers have threatened seniors by telling them they will lose their Medicare benefits if they do not provide information, such as bank account numbers and personal identifying information, over the telephone.

Attorney General Goddard offers the following tips to consumers:

- Be wary of callers that say "You must act now" or you lose your benefits.
- Do not give out personal information, such as Social Security number, bank account numbers or credit card numbers to anyone you do not know.
- It is against Medicare rules for their callers to ask for bank account numbers or other personal information over the telephone.
- If you receive a call from someone who claims to represent Medicare, ask the person for an address and phone number that you can verify with Medicare.
- Report any suspicious calls to the Attorney General's Office at 602-542-5763 or to the U.S. Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General at 1-800-HHSTIPS.

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, please contact the Attorney General's Office in Phoenix at 602.542.5763, in Tucson at 520.628.6504, or outside the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas at 1.800.352.8431. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has 23 satellite offices throughout the state with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site. Consumers can also file complaints online by visiting the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov.

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